

# I NTRODUCTION TO W ORLD L ITERATURE T RADITIONS

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## T h i s s o u n d s f a m i l i a r ...

December 5, 2009 by [bhorn1](#)

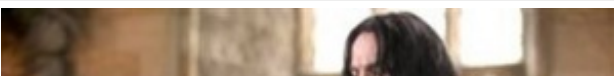


HBO's new show "Bored to Death" is about a young writer who decides to pursue a career as an unlicensed private investigator after reading novels about private detectives. Sounds familiar right? He even has a chubby sidekick. I haven't seen the show, but it may be worth watching.

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## F i n a l E x a m I n f o

December 4, 2009 by [Eustis](#)



Compose a dialogue between two characters from any of

  
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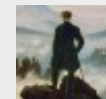
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the works we have read. The topic of conversation is: the nature of literature. What is it? What does it do? What is it for? Does it matter at all? Why? Consider very carefully what each character would have to say about literature, and how that character would say it.

### Some parameters to consider:

- **TWO PAGES**—as close to exact as you can get. The space restriction is part of the test. Every one of your words must carry weight. Also along these lines: the answer must be typed and printed. Double-spaced. Twelve point type. Margins no wider than 1.25. Online or digital submissions of any kind are NOT acceptable.
- The characters must come from two different works by two different authors. (That is, one cannot have Achilles from the *Iliad* talking to Odysseus of the *Odyssey*. Or the Odysseus of the *Iliad* addressing the Odysseus of the *Odyssey*. However, having Homer's Odysseus speak with Virgil or Dante's Odysseus might yield some interesting results for the very brave writer.)
- Along those lines, authors, in their ironic, in-text characters, are fair game for the intrepid.
- You may compose the dialogue as prose, poetry or drama. You have plenty of examples to follow from each genre. If you shift genres in the answer, you should be sure that the reason you did so is evident.
- You are not to give or receive assistance of any kind on this exam. Permissible sources include your notes (and **ONLY** your notes) and your text., **ONLY**. You are on your honor in this matter.
- Good luck, and have fun. At its best, this will be a treat to write and read.

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## The Don is concluded :

December 4, 2009 by [jgprech](#)

Don Quixote's conclusion is intriguing. His illness and subsequent death takes place over the course of one week, or seven days. I'm sure Cervantes did not choose this without reason. Though specific illness is not listed, Cervantes makes it sound as though the Quixote became sick after not fulfilling his goals and dreams. Cervantes makes Don Quixote's death a result of his disappointment and then he renounces chivalry and the books that ruled his life. He even wants to be called "Alonso Quixano". While the Quixote may be disappointed or disgusted by his life, the reader is not. His crazy, zany life has entertained the reader and many of the people Don Quixote has encountered throughout the story.

Cervantes ends Don Quixote's story by showing that Don Quixote has finally realized that he is not a knight. The Quixote writes a will, which is something that was never written about in his chivalric books. The Quixote also wishes he had more time to read other books besides just the ones that were his passion. Perhaps Cervantes is telling the reader something by having Don Quixote wish

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he had read other books. Either way, Don Quixote concludes with its hero exonerated to an extent and dead. In my opinion, that's the only way to go. Many great books and stories end with the hero dead, where his greatness can be exaggerated and glorified for generations. Cervantes' classic is going to be read forever, just as it should be.

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## P e r f e c t   e n d i n g   o f   t h e

December 3, 2009 by [alexandra23](#)

Fortunately Don Quixote and Sancho meet a significant character whose name Quixote recognizes from the fake continuation of their endeavors. The don is kind and agreeable; he unhesitatingly believed Sancho's claim of his and his master's veracity because Sancho's well-known sense of humor was evident in their short discourse and he had not heard anything nearly as comical from the Sancho he had been traveling with. The evidence Cervantes gives proving the reality of his Quixote and Sancho instead of the false sequel's heros is simple but indisputable and a pretty hilarious jab at the imitating writer.

The heros (after defending their honor or reality) made it home with the plan to be shepherds, just a different romantic fantasy of Quixote's that will bide him time repenting his failure. However, this plan did not come to fruition, instead Quixote's fantasies came to an end. Quixote fell ill for six days then realized at once his insanity when he woke from a deep sleep. Quixote repented his frivolous years spent on chivalry and denounced it repeatedly until his death. Quixote was made ill by his depression due to failure as a knight errant, but once he realized that he was not Don Quixote he did not recover. The life of a romantic is meant to be spent frivolously and his redemption and grace are found in death; Cervantes perfectly ties up the end of the history of his hero.

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## W h a t   T r e a s u r e s   A r e   W r

December 3, 2009 by [nelrod1](#)

Once again we encounter the topic of storytelling and its sufficiency. In Chapter Fifty Two Sancho and Don Quixote return home. Upon Sancho's arrival his wife hurries to ask him what he has brought for her. An apparently poor family, the wife of sancho seeks clothing and food for her children. However, these things are not what Sancho considers to be of much value. Sancho brushes her off and dispels her with the promise of an island. When, Teresa presses the matter Sancho tells her that he has plenty of stories to amuse her. So we have come once again to the question of importance in storytelling. Cervantes betrays his loyalties through Sancho's words and one may assume that Cervantes would sympathize with Scheherazade's of storytelling. Throughout the text of Don Quixote the question of literature and its power have been present. However, the limit of such power is questioned here by Teresa. Will wonderful tales of adventure provide food, or clothing? Will the worries of a mother be assuaged through the telling of fantastical quests? This question may not be answered in the context of the story, but in the framework of Cervantes life, one may say that

it certainly does. Perhaps due to his writing, Cervantes manages to earn a decent living. Is the productivity of a story defined by its power to entertain or by its power to provide a full belly and dry bed?

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## Q u i x o t e   t h e   C r i t i c :   A

December 3, 2009 by [alexhaydenstanford](#)

There is a lot going on at the end of Don Quixote, depending on where you consider to be the end. The most memorable and impressive thing that I read was the encounter of Don Quixote at the Book Printing Shop. It seemed perfectly natural that he would be curious to see how the books that he loved so much, and who ultimately brought him to his current state of “nobility,” came to be. I was a bit surprised when Cervantes, as I read it, seemed to drop Quixotes’ character a bit in order to make an observation on the nature of literature. At first he is very impressed by the author of the translation, but then he goes on to explain how translation of literature from one simple language to another, unless they are descending from the most original and pure languages which Cervantes considers to be greek and latin, are close at best but often come up missing or obscuring some of the finer qualities and meanings that can only be appreciated through engaging a work in its’ native tongue.

This happens to be a sentiment I strongly agree with and have become greatly aware of through the study of foreign languages. But as Don Quixote mentions, there are worse things that go on, and I still appreciate the ability to read Cervantes even though it’s in English. It in fact motivates me to learn Spanish well enough to re-read it.

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## R o l e   R e v e r s a l :   A   P o s i t

December 3, 2009 by [jmodell23](#)

In the opening paragraph of Chapter V, the presumptive transcriber of this translated version of the Quixote claims that Sancho Panza’s odd behavior could cast doubt on the veracity of this part of our story. But in describing Sancho Panza and Teresa’s conversation, Cervantes is really showing us the influence that Don Quixote’s madness has had on the otherwise down-to-earth Panza, and the different roles that people take in different interpersonal situations. In this conversation, the squire plays the role of Don Quixote while his wife takes up the sensible role in the argument, normally played by Sancho Panza himself. When her husband goes off in a flight of fancy describing their future moneyed life and the future of their daughter, Teresa must bring him back to reality and reassert the hard truths of the matter, much as Sancho continually tries to put Quixote in contact with the reality lying behind his imagined adventures. In a telling moment, Sancho even corrects the grammar of his wife in the exact manner that he is often reprimanded by Quixote for his abuse of language, telling her “*Resolved* is the word, wife, not *revolved*.” Her response also mirrors Sancho’s frustration at being constantly corrected when she says “I speak as God’s

pleased I should.”

However, when Sancho Panza is in Don Quixote’s company again, they step right back into place in their former roles, with Quixote correcting Panza’s malapropisms and Panza desperately trying to avert misadventure. So why, then, does Cervantes go through the trouble of showing us this role reversal in the conversation between Teresa and Panza? I think it is in a way both his testament to the infectiousness of spirited insanity, and a demonstration of the way a steadfast friend will defend the ideas of his companion, even if in private company he may think the idea’s he’s defending are indeed insane, and rail against the very same ideas himself.

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## T h e M o u t h o f t h e B e h o

December 3, 2009 by [shmeisani](#)

In chapter 14 of [Don Quixote](#), Marcela delivers one of the best monologues given by a beautiful woman in history. Throughout many of our readings, we have been met with pictures of men who seem to be dying because their love is either too distant from them or she does not feel the same love as they do. Every time I read these stories, I would always feel bad for the poet of course, because he was able to make his pain seem so poetic and his love interest so evil, but is this really the case? Why should anyone be considered evil simply because they do not feel the same emotions that someone else may feel for them? In the case of Marcela, it is said that thousands have come to beg her to marry them, and she has refused them all. Every time, Marcela states that she does not wish marry any of them. From this, she gains a reputation in the town as a cold, heartless woman. Marcela says that “beauty in a virtuous woman is like a distant fire or sharp sword, which don’t burn or cut anyone who doesn’t come too close.” In this moment, Marcela is not only defending her own honor, but the honor of women throughout the ages who have received the same treatment she has simply because of their beauty. At the end of the speech, it still appears that not a single soul was listening though, since their disdain for her remains. When will beautiful women ever be truly free?

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## a m b i t i o n v s r e s p o n s i b i

December 3, 2009 by [sledge24](#)

Nowhere in Don Quixote is the rift between delusion and reality discussed so plainly as in chapter v, part II. Cervantes uses Sancho’s argument with his wife to analyze the causes and consequences of blind ambition within the impoverished. He even clues the reader with mentioning Sancho’s higher reasoning in this chapter, indicating the presence of deeper truths. Interestingly enough, Teresa’s arguments seem to ring true, rather than Sancho’s.

Sancho has clearly been infected with Don Quixote’s quest for adventure and honor, believing it may well get him an island, but Teresa brings home to him the realities of caring for his family financially and emotionally. By wandering abroad

to bring fame to his family name, Sancho ironically neglects his family personally. Teresa loves Sancho for who he is and enjoys the honest life of a peasant, knowing its the simple pleasures of home and family which bring true happiness. Sancho, however, holds himself to the chivalrous ideal and believes he will gain his island if he is honorable and steadfast. This notion is where chivalry deludes the soul. First of all, success is not guaranteed to the honorable. Practical needs and real obstacles and chance stand in everyones path. Secondly, Sancho's need for control of his island is addressed by teresa as escapism from his poverty. She reminds him that noone controls fate, and since they've survived so far without power, sporting all the benefits and trappings of governorship would be flying false colors. Sancho in turn compares poverty with bad character and asserts that prosperity covers all sins. This would be valid, but Sancho is after power and success through a fantastical, outdated code of ethics which Cervantes debunks with straight talk of family and responsibility through Teresa.

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## P e o p l e   w i l l   a l w a y s   b e

December 2, 2009 by [jgprech](#)

When first reading Don Quixote, I got the feeling that I was reading a Monty Python movie adaptation. After reading the introduction and the first few chapters of the book, I couldn't help but imagine a modern Don Quixote where a crazy guy rides through campus on a horse convinced he is a cowboy. People know Don Quixote is nuts, but they laugh and so does the reader. Many people "play along" at first, including the people at the first inn he encounters. Once again, I could not help but imagine a crazy guy that people simply feel is beyond help, so they act as though he is sane and knows what he is talking about just to get him out of their hair.

The second prologue obviously speaks directly to the reader as Cervantes vaguely insults the author of the sequel. As the story progresses, especially in Part II, people try to convince Don Quixote not to go on another adventure, which of course does no good. As the story progresses, the characters of [Don Quixote](#) draw the reader in more and more as you begin to understand the minds of the characters. The reader understands the situations and realities of the characters better than the actual characters, which may be part of the reason this book is such an easy and fun one to read.

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